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## **LOS ANGELES COUNTY HOMEOWNERS WIN FREE HOME ENERGY MAKEOVERS**

*Energy Upgrade California in Los Angeles County Announces Contest Winners; Provides Summer Tips for Improving Energy Efficiency*

**LOS ANGELES - May 12, 2011** - Six homeowners from across Los Angeles County will receive free home energy makeovers in a contest organized as part of Energy Upgrade California in LA County, a program designed to help homeowners save money through energy efficient improvements to their homes. Five homeowners will receive energy-efficient home upgrade packages worth an estimated \$10,000 each and certification as a green home and the grand-prize winner will receive a free "toward zero" energy-efficiency upgrade package worth an estimated \$50,000 and certification as a green home.

Los Angeles County Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky hopes the contest winners will inspire local homeowners to participate in the program. "Implementing "Energy Upgrade California in Los Angeles County will help homeowners enhance their property values while cutting energy bills and energy consumption," said Supervisor Yaroslavsky. "We hope today's event helps draw attention to this program and that eligible County residents will take advantage of the rebates and incentives to make their homes more energy efficient."

The Energy Upgrade California in LA County program rolled out to residents in early 2011 to provide LA County homeowners who make energy-saving home improvements with rebates and incentives of up to \$4,500—in addition to savings on monthly utility bills. Energy Upgrade home improvements that qualify for rebates and incentives include insulation, sealing, HVAC upgrades, energy-efficient windows, tankless water heaters and other "fixed" improvements. The program emphasizes a "whole house" approach, rather than installing individual improvements, as the most efficient and effective way to save money on energy bills and qualify for the maximum rebate available.

"Los Angeles County has stepped out of the gate as a leader in building awareness for the positive environmental, health and financial benefits of energy efficient homes," said U.S. Department of Energy Secretary Steven Chu. "By providing access to information and resources and promoting home energy upgrades through the Energy Upgrade California program, LA County continues to inspire the community to pursue green living."

To be eligible for the rebates and incentives, the work must be performed by an Energy Upgrade California participating contractor. Through the Energy Upgrade California website, homeowners will be directed to the list of participating contractors specially trained in energy efficiency upgrades.

"A healthy environment starts at home," said Howard Choy, General Manager of the Los Angeles County Office of Sustainability. "Energy Upgrade California certified contractors will help homeowners determine which upgrades can be performed to have the best health and comfort benefits and most significant financial impact."

Energy Upgrade California incentives and rebates will vary in the cities of Los Angeles, Pasadena, Glendale, Burbank, Long Beach, Vernon and Azusa; however, the utilities serving those cities are developing their Energy Upgrade programs for 2011 and some utility energy efficiency retrofit rebates/incentives are available.

Energy Upgrade California in Los Angeles County expects to retrofit up to 18,000 homes with an average 20 percent reduction in energy use, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and create about 2,500 new green jobs in Los Angeles County. The program will ultimately eliminate about 20,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide greenhouse gas emissions—the air quality improvement equivalent of planting well over half a million trees.

With summer approaching and energy use at a peak, conserving energy and keeping utility costs down is top of mind. Some easy ways homeowners can improve the energy efficiency of their homes to protect the environment and save money include:

- **Reduce heating and cooling payments by sealing air and duct leaks, cleaning air filters and insulating your home.** Reducing air leaks could be a potentially massive energy saver.
  - Seal and insulate your ducts to make sure the air goes where it's supposed to. As much of half of your heated or cooled air could be escaping before it reaches rooms.
  - Insulate your house to slow the rate that heat flows out of the house in winter and the effect of the sun in summer, so less energy is required to heat or cool the house.
  - Clean or replace air filters every month or two, especially during peak summer and winter months. Dirt build up can lead to slow down air-flow, causing your system to work harder and increasing your utility bills.
  - Plant shade trees and shrubs on the west side of the house so that in summer, the foliage blocks infrared radiation that warms the house while in winter the bare branches let this radiation come through to warm the house.
- **Improve the efficiency of your hot water system.** The average household spends \$400-\$600 on water heating per year, making it the second largest residential energy use behind heating and cooling.
  - Insulate pipes and the heater to decrease excess heat loss as water travels to your tap.
  - Turn down the temperature of your water heater to warm setting (120 degrees Fahrenheit). If your water heater is set too high, at 140 degrees Fahrenheit or above, you can waste almost \$400 annually.
  - When you go on vacation this summer, turn your water heater off.
- **Replace incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs).** Most people don't think about the fact that the electricity to run a light bulb costs much more than the bulb itself. Compact Fluorescent Light bulbs (CFLs) use 66% less energy than a standard incandescent bulb and last up to 10 times longer.
  - Replace a 100-watt incandescent bulb with a 32-watt CFL to save \$30 in energy costs over the life of the bulb.

Supervisor Yaroslavsky encourages County homeowners to act before the onset of hot summer weather. "Please visit our Energy Upgrade website, learn more about the program, and get in touch with an approved Energy Upgrade California contractor. They can help homeowners find ways to make their homes more comfortable, take full advantage of rebates and incentives, and cut their utility bills down to size."

#### **About Energy Upgrade California in Los Angeles County**

Energy Upgrade California is a state-wide energy efficiency program for homeowners and collaboration among the California Energy Commission, the California Public Utilities Commission, utilities, local governments and the private sector. Funding for the Energy Upgrade California program comes from multiple American Reinvestment and Recovery Act sources, including: Los Angeles County's Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant; U.S. Department of Energy's Better Buildings Program funding; and a California Energy Commission discretionary grant. Energy Upgrade California in Los Angeles County is administered and overseen by an alliance among LA County, Southern California Edison and Southern California Gas Company. Los Angeles County is one of the first counties in California to roll out this program. Locally, county officials are coordinating with the utilities to provide homeowners with information on home upgrade benefits, financing, incentives and home energy ratings, and help with finding participating contractors. For more information, consumers can visit [www.EnergyUpgradeCA.org](http://www.EnergyUpgradeCA.org) or call (877)785-2237.